Joint APGA & IPLOCA HSE Meeting

IPLOCA East Far East Regional Meeting Sydney

Wednesday, 2 December 2026

Grand Ballroom – level -1
Shangri-La Hotel
176 Cumberland St., Sydney, Australia

AGENDA

08:30 – 09:00 Registration and welcome refreshments

SESSION 1 – WELCOME & HSE

09:00 – 09:15 Acknowledgement of Country and APGA Welcome Note
Steve Davies, Chief Executive Officer, APGA

IPLOCA Welcome Note
Georges Hage, Executive Director, IPLOCA

09:15 – 09:30 Association Overview IPLOCA
Matthew O'Connell, 2nd Vice President, Director East, Far East, IPLOCA and President Nacap Pty Ltd

09:30 – 09:45 APGA HSE Committee Update
Phil Woodhouse, Chair APGA HSE Committee and General Manager, Health and Safety, Spiecapag Australia

09:45 – 10:00 IPLOCA HSE Committee Update
Giovanni Muriana, Director Europe Central, HSE & CSR Committee Chair IPLOCA and CEO, MAX STREICHER S.p.A.

10:00 – 10:30 Pipeline Infrastructure Safety: Building the Capacity to Fail Safely on Complex Projects
Ben Rees, Chief Operating Officer, Nacap Pty Ltd

10:30 – 11:00 – Morning Tea –

SESSION 2 – FUTURE OF GAS IN AUSTRALIA

11:00 – 11:30 Keynote Address – At a Crossroads: Deciphering Australia's Energy Future
Gordon Ramsay, Lead Energy Coverage, RBC Capital Markets

11:30 – 12:00 Bringing the Beetaloo Basin to Market
Mark Fothergill, Board Member, APGA. General Manager Gas Engineering Solutions, APA Group

12:00 – 12:30 Taroom Trough – From Coal Seam Gas to Oil and Gas
David Lukas, Former Board Member IPLOCA. Managing Director, AJ Lucas

12:30 – 13:45 – Lunch –

SESSION 3 – PNG MARKET & PROJECTS

13:45 – 14:15 The PNG Frontier: Delivering Mega-Projects Whilst Embracing Extreme Terrains and Complex Risk Profiles
Angus McTavish, Founder and Managing Director, Conventional Energy Resources

14:15 – 14:45 Building Water Infrastructure for a Renewable-Energy Economy: Lessons from the Fitzroy to Gladstone Pipeline
Leon Richards, Treasurer/Board Member APGA, Past President IPLOCA, and Technical Director Pipelines, McConnell Dowell

14:45 – 15:15 – Afternoon Tea –

SESSION 4 – PROJECTS & TECHNOLOGY

15:15 – 15:45 Kurri Kurri: Project Overview and Future of GPG in Australia
Phil Woodhouse, Chair APGA HSE Committee and General Manager, Health and Safety, Spiecapag Australia

15:45 – 16:15 Minimised Impact: Sustainable Installation of New Pipeline Networks
Simon Herrenknecht, Director, Associate Members, IPLOCA and Head of Business Division Pipeline – Business Unit Utility Tunnelling, Herrenknecht AG

16:15 – 16:30 Closing Remarks
Sean Ward, President APGA and General Manager Asset Management, Jemena
Bill Solomon, President IPLOCA, and CEO & President Vacuworx Global, LLC

17:00 – 21:00 – APGA Christmas Party –
Grace Hotel, 77 York Street, Sydney
(860 metres from Shangri-La – please allow 15-minute walk)

SPEAKERS

Steve Davies is the Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Pipelines and Gas Association (APGA). With over 20 years of experience in energy policy, infrastructure leadership, and stakeholder engagement, Steve is a leading advocate for Australia's energy infrastructure sector. Since stepping into the CEO role in 2017, he has focused on driving practical, evidence-based solutions to navigate the complex challenges of the nation's energy transition. Steve previously served as APGA's National Policy Manager and held regulatory roles within the Australian Government. An engineer by training, he is dedicated to fostering industry collaboration and securing robust energy outcomes.

Georges Hage is an accomplished international senior executive with over 40 years of expertise in management, finance, operations, and strategic development across the energy infrastructure, utility, and construction sectors. He currently serves as the Executive Director of IPLOCA (International Pipe Line and Offshore Contractors Association), a role he assumed in August 2023. Throughout his distinguished career, Georges has held prominent leadership positions, including Group CEO of The C.A.T. Group and Consortium Representative for the Balkan Stream gas pipeline project. He holds a Master's in Civil Engineering from Saint Joseph University of Beirut and an MBA from ESCP Business School in Paris.

Matthew O'Connell is the President of Nacap, an energy and infrastructure construction company. His core experience is rooted deeply within the pipeline industry, beginning with his first project on the Amadeus Basin to Darwin Pipeline in 1986. Over his 25 years with Nacap—including 9 years as COO and 11 years as President—Matthew has led executive management across Australia and Papua New Guinea. Whilst pipelines remain at Nacap's core, he has been instrumental in diversifying Nacap's business into various additional sectors like defence, renewables, power, and water, while maintaining an exceptional track record in driving sustainable growth and safety.

Phil Woodhouse is an Australian executive leader who serves as the General Manager - Health, Safety, and Plant at the pipeline infrastructure company Spiecapag Australia. Based in Brisbane, Queensland, he has built a unique career by successfully blending industrial safety management with his personal passion for creative media and storytelling. Since joining Spiecapag in 2013, Phil has supported the delivery of massive cross-regional pipeline projects. He uses innovative video and digital communication to heavily enhance workforce safety culture and team engagement. An award-winning industry professional, Phil focuses on human-centric safety initiatives and building high-performing, connected corporate cultures.

Giovanni Muriana is an accomplished international executive with over 20 years of experience in heavy infrastructure, pipeline engineering, and the energy transition. Since 2012, he has held a senior leadership role at MAX STREICHER S.p.A. In this role, he has successfully expanded the firm's international footprint across Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, while strategically pivoting its operations toward major renewable energy and EPC infrastructure projects. A visionary leader in sustainable engineering, Giovanni specialises in navigating complex regulatory environments, driving technical innovation, and delivering large-scale utilities that support global decarbonisation goals.

Ben Rees is the Chief Operating Officer of Nacap, a premier international energy infrastructure contractor. He has spent nearly 30 years rising through the ranks at the company, progressing from project management into executive leadership. Ben oversees complex operations across Australia and South East Asia. He has been instrumental in supporting Nacap's strategic diversification into new energy sectors, while steering sizable regional achievements like Western Australia's 580 km Northern Goldfields Interconnect pipeline and expanding Nacap's PNG operations into its tenth year. Throughout, his strong commitment to safety leadership serves as a defining feature of his management style.

Gordon Ramsay is Lead Energy Coverage at RBC Capital Markets, providing institutional equity research on Australian listed energy and energy utility companies. With more than 25 years analysing ASX-listed upstream, refining, utility and infrastructure businesses, he previously held senior energy research roles at UBS and Citi, where he was rated Australia's number one energy analyst in leading investor surveys. His career also spans funds management, project finance, and board and senior executive roles. A geophysicist by training, Gordon has led the delivery of new onshore oil and gas field discoveries. He holds an MBA from Monash University and is a GAICD.

Mark Fothergill has spent more than 35 years in Australia's energy infrastructure and pipeline industry, most of them at APA Group.
He specialises in pipeline engineering, strategy and the delivery of large-scale energy networks. His projects include the Junee–Griffith Pipeline and the Moomba–Sydney Ethane Pipeline, and he played a key role in developing APA's east and west coast gas grids. He is known for a practical, consistent approach and a focus on safe, reliable infrastructure.
Mark has shared his technical expertise through national committees and research bodies. He is a director of the Australian Pipelines and Gas Association (APGA). He previously chaired its Research and Standards Committee and was a director of the Energy Pipelines Cooperative.

David Lukas is the Managing Director of AJ Lucas Services, a privately held specialist engineering and drilling firm established by the Lukas family in 1958. With over 20 years of experience spanning energy, infrastructure, finance, and law, David guides the company's fully integrated design and delivery operations across Australia and the Asia-Pacific region. He proudly carries forward a rich family legacy; his late father, Andrew (Andy) Lukas, was a legendary pioneer who introduced horizontal directional drilling (HDD) to Australia and transformed the business from its early contracting roots into a pioneering force in major pipeline delivery.

Angus McTavish is the Founder and Managing Director of Conventional Energy Resources, a Brisbane-based consultancy specialising in technical advisory, project assurance, and delivery support for pipeline and energy infrastructure projects across Australia and the Asia-Pacific region. With over 30 years of international experience, Angus has led major pipeline construction projects in remote terrains across Southeast Asia, New Zealand, and Azerbaijan. Notably, he spent 15 years with Nacap, including nine years leading its Papua New Guinea operations and serving as Vice President, Resources Australasia. He brings a practical, construction-led perspective to complex project execution and regional industry challenges.

Leon Richards is the Group Technical Director – Resources at McConnell Dowell, a major international infrastructure and pipeline contractor. With nearly 30 years of civil engineering and construction experience, Leon joined the company in 1996. He has since steered the delivery of complex EPC water and gas pipeline developments across Australia and South East Asia. Most recently, he served as the Project Director for the Fitzroy to Gladstone Pipeline (FGP), a massive, landmark water security project delivered for the Gladstone Area Water Board (GAWB) and the Queensland Government. His extensive expertise spans challenging cross-country pipeline environments and complex infrastructure execution.

Phil Woodhouse is an Australian executive leader who serves as the General Manager - Health, Safety, and Plant at the pipeline infrastructure company Spiecapag Australia. Based in Brisbane, Queensland, he has built a unique career by successfully blending industrial safety management with his personal passion for creative media and storytelling. Since joining Spiecapag in 2013, Phil has supported the delivery of massive cross-regional pipeline projects. He uses innovative video and digital communication to heavily enhance workforce safety culture and team engagement. An award-winning industry professional, Phil focuses on human-centric safety initiatives and building high-performing, connected corporate cultures.

Simon Herrenknecht is the Head of the Business Division Pipeline at Herrenknecht AG, the global technology leader in mechanised tunnelling systems. Since joining the Germany-headquartered firm in 2014, Simon has driven the technical advancement and global deployment of underground pipeline technologies. He specialises in cutting-edge trenchless methods, including Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD), microtunnelling, and Direct Pipe solutions designed for complex crossings. In his leadership role, he directly steers the company's focus on green energy infrastructure, driving the sustainable grid expansion and innovative engineering solutions required to safely transition underground networks toward alternative fuels.

Sean Ward is the General Manager – Asset Management (Gas Markets) at Jemena, one of Australia's largest energy infrastructure companies. A chemical engineer by training, Sean brings nearly 30 years of leadership experience across gas transmission networks, electricity distribution, and complex project delivery. Since joining Jemena in 2004, he has steered the performance, operations, and commercial strategy of the company's extensive pipeline footprint. Sean is widely recognised for leading pivotal renewable gas initiatives, including an extensive hydrogen compatibility study on the Eastern Gas Pipeline (EGP) to help transition traditional networks toward a low-carbon energy economy.

Bill Solomon is the Founder, Chairman, and CEO of Vacuworx, a global leader in heavy-duty material handling technology. Since founding the Tulsa-based company in 1999, Bill has pioneered the development of advanced vacuum and hydraulic lifting systems designed to eliminate traditional hooks, chains, and slings. As a Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) and pipeline technology specialist, he has driven major engineering innovations that allow operators to safely lift, tilt, and place massive drill stems and pipes directly from the host machine. His commitment to site safety, automation, and "Vacunomics" has established Vacuworx as an indispensable asset for international pipeline construction.